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RECEIVED

AUG 08 2016

City of Belvedere

August 4, 2016

Alison Foulis, City Clerk
City of Belvedere
450 San Rafael Ave
Belvedere, CA 94920

RE: August 8, 2016 Council Meeting; Agenda Item 13
Deer Group Proposals

Dear Mayor McAuliffe and Members of the City Council:

As a resident of Belvedere, I would like to voice my strong objection to the expenditure of any City funds to support the 2016 Deer Group's continuing efforts to reduce the local deer population on Belvedere Island. DNA testing of the deer – ostensibly for the purpose of conducting a census of the local population -- is just a first step in the Group's ill-advised proposal to sterilize the deer and eventually eliminate the population altogether. I urge the City Council to "Just Say No" to this proposal. The City has already expended significant resources and time studying the Island's deer, and various wildlife agencies have already raised significant concerns about the proposed sterilization program. One has only to read the IJ to see that this ongoing deer controversy has made Belvedere the butt of jokes throughout Marin County.

If the City Council is unwilling to reject the testing and sterilization proposals out of hand (as it should), the Council should require the project proponents to pay for the DNA testing and all other aspects of their proposal. Belvedere taxpayers, many of whom enjoy the deer and think they should be left alone, should not be made to pay for this folly. There are much better uses for these funds.

I believe that the City should treat the 2016 Deer Group like any other project proponent and require them to:

1. Reimburse the City for staff time and expenses;
2. Pay for any required CEQA review, including the expert reports that will be required;
3. Pay for the project, if approved; and
4. Indemnify the City for legal costs and expenses, that are almost certain to be incurred if the project is approved.

If the City Council decides to fund the deer proposal, then – in the interest of fairness and ecological balance -- I would like to bring to the Council's attention the problems I am having with other wildlife that lives on the Island:

- I had to evict the skunks that were living under my house and sending very powerful odors into my bedroom;¹
- The Island's squirrels keep raiding my bird feeders and costing me a fortune in bird seed; and
- The raccoons keep dumping over my garbage.

I suspect that the population of these animals is out of control and I believe the City needs to determine the exact number of skunks, squirrels and raccoons in Belvedere using DNA testing (since each critter tends to look the same) and undertake a program to sterilize these animals to reduce their numbers. Since these animals are smaller than deer and easier to capture their sterilization would be less expensive than the deer sterilization proposal. And, since the skunks will already be on the operating table, it would be a simple matter to remove their scent glands, providing immediate relief for the odor problem. It would be a twofer.

If the Council is interested in my suggestion, I'm sure I can find five or six residents to support this program – at the City's expense. We would be pleased to present our written proposal at the next City Council meeting.

Sincerely



Stephen Platek

Cc: The ARK– Letters to the Editor

¹ Despite their eviction, these animals continue to enter my yard, (uninvited I might add) at or near dusk and when frightened will emit a chemical cloud that would make Chevron proud.

Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Jeff Corda <shack.jc@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 06, 2016 4:13 AM
To: Alison Foulis - City Clerk
Subject: Deer population problems.

Mrs. Foulis,

I have been reading a little bit about the deer population problems that some individuals believe your city has. I was just curious instead of sterilizing the animals has anyone brought up the idea of relocating them. Seems like it would be a more logical and cost effective idea. I even have a ranch in northern marin where you could release them, as long as California DFG would allow it.

Thanks
Jeff Corda

Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Mary Neilan - City Manager
Sent: Monday, August 08, 2016 9:00 AM
To: Alison Foulis - City Clerk
Subject: Fwd: The deer issue

Begin forwarded message:

From: Bill Rothman
Date: August 8, 2016 at 8:54:17 AM PDT
Subject: The deer issue

From Bill Rothman

Dear Ms. Neilan, and members of the City Council

It is my perception that there are at least these two categories of consideration.

1) The category of advisability, meaning whether or not such a program should be carried out, even if it was feasible to carry it out. Expert testimony, opposing the program was presented by the Marin Humane Society and Wild Care at the last meeting.

2) The category of feasibility, meaning, that, even if such a program was advisable, is it feasible to carry it out?

At the last meeting, issues were raised about how such a program might well not be feasible, due to, the following:

A) Private property rights

a) Refusal of property owners to allow darting on their land.

b) Refusal of property owners to allow the collection, from their land, of tranquilized deer.

c) This evening's "deer stool DNA analysis" proposal broadens this issue to include the right of property owners to preclude collection of deer stool from their property.

Also:

At the June meeting, the point was made that the deer, when darted, run for some distance before falling down. This would mean that deer could not be darted on any property that was close to a property owned by someone who had exercised their right not to have the activity on their property, because, if a deer darted on a neighboring property were to run onto the property of such a person, the deer could not be collected from such a property.

Because most Belvedere properties adjoin three or more other properties, and in some areas of Belvedere are very close to still other, but not adjoining properties, this would mean that when residents put their properties off-limits to the activity, there would also be many other properties on which the activity could not take place. The net effect of this preclusion of the activity on

such a large number of Belvedere properties would almost certainly cause ineffectiveness of the proposed program, due to so many deer being precluded from being darted and operated upon.

Conclusion:

It is my perception, having heard the testimony of the experts who have spoken, and having read references helpfully provided by staff that

- 1) A deer population reduction program should not be undertaken, and
- 2) Due to the private property issues outlined above, even if such a program should be considered by the council to be otherwise advisable, there must, before any such program is further contemplated, and before any further city funding is undertaken, be a survey of how many residents would refuse to allow the program on their properties, and would thereby, if a sufficient number of residents were to refuse to have the program on their properties, make the darting program unfeasible.

Sincerely,
Bill Rothman

Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Sylvia P Evans [mailto:page@duhzoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, August 09, 2016 8:53 AM

To: Mary Neilan - City Manager; Bob McCaskill - Councilmember; Claire McAuliffe - Councilmember; Nancy Kemnitzer - Councilmember; James Campbell - Mayor; Marty Winter-Vice Mayor

Cc: fpg@belcap.com; boater54@aol.com; carolynhansen102@gmail.com; turnermc@ix.netcom.com; owen_john@mac.com; richcrofton@me.com

Subject: Deer

To the City Manager and City Council Members,

In 1996 our family moved to the beautiful city of Belvedere. At that time deer sightings were rare. Twenty years later I'm screaming at a large buck that is chasing my 11 pound dog in my fenced yard. I had to draw its attention towards me to allow my dog time to run up the back steps. I now know my deer fence isn't high enough to keep them out of my yard and away from my dogs. I can no longer let my dogs out without first checking the yard.

A few years ago a buck started marking our front steps during rutting season. The smell is offensive and each morning during the season I stick my head out the front door to smell if I need to wash the steps again.

The deer population has become a pressing issue that the city council needs to address. I strongly feel the deer present a health and safety issue. They carry a disease that is debilitating for humans and domestic pets. They cause hazardous driving conditions and their migration around the island foraging has eroded the hillsides in many places. They have no natural enemy on the island and the city seems to be unwilling to manage the population.

Over the last few years I've heard people say the deer population has not grown. I strongly disagree with that statement. Last week as I drove down our street a herd of approximately fifteen deer, including three bucks and four fawns were walking down the middle of the road. Two of the fawns jumped out of the bushes in front of my car, luckily I didn't hit one.

Respectfully,

Sylvia and Seth Evans

246 Bella Vista Ave

Belvedere, CA 94920

Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Mary Neilan - City Manager
Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2016 9:14 AM
To: Alison Foulis - City Clerk
Subject: FW: Got deer? Cougars could help control herds, study says | Fox News

-----Original Message-----

From: Wyman Harris [mailto:wymanharris1@me.com]

Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2016 6:18 AM

To: Marshall Turner; John Owen; Bob McCaskill; Wyman Harris; Frank Greene; George Gness; Meg Crofton; Carolyn Hansen; Claire McAuliffe; Marty Winter; Bob McCaskill - Councilmember; Nancy Kemnitzer - Councilmember; James Campbell; Mary Neilan - City Manager

Subject: Got deer? Cougars could help control herds, study says | Fox News

It takes courage to think outside the the box. We have a better solution.

<http://www.foxnews.com/science/2016/08/11/got-deer-cougars-could-help-control-herds-study-says.html>

Sent from my iPhone

Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Mary Neilan - City Manager
Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2016 10:25 AM
To: Alison Foulis - City Clerk
Subject: FW: And you laughed at my suggestion...

-----Original Message-----

From: Wyman Harris [mailto:boater54@aol.com]

Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2016 10:04 AM

To: Albert Richards

Cc: Marshall Turner; John Owen; Bob McCaskill; Wyman Harris; Frank Greene; George Gness; Meg Crofton; Claire McAuliffe; Carolyn Hansen; Mary Neilan - City Manager; Marty Winter; Bob McCaskill - Councilmember; Nancy Kemnitzer - Councilmember; James Campbell

Subject: Re: And you laughed at my suggestion...

All interesting suggestions to be considered. Wyman

Sent from my iPhone

> On Aug 11, 2016, at 8:39 AM, Albert Richards <AlbertRds@yahoo.com> wrote:

>
> I think working with targeted, individual homeowners to restrict
> habitat would do wonders for population reduction. We, for example,
> have had ongoing problems with deer coming up from the water to bed
> down below our upper fence line. We keep putting in additional
> fencing, and they keep finding different and places to stay on the
> hillside. I need to get a hammer drill and put some posts down close
> to the water to eliminate this spot once and for all. That would be one family displaced.

>
> Brush reduction would also be helpful - both on private land but also
> on City property. Less low cover would mean fewer places they can
> hide, and I think this would force some of them out. The recent
> clearing of the home that just sold at the bottom of Beach is a classic example.

>
> We also should think about restricting their passageways and just make
> it a more difficult place for them to live here. You will have a
> very, very difficult time getting the city to actually cull the herd
> (which is what should be done), but I think we should be on them to
> put up some fencing to reduce the eyesores. For example, some sort of
> fencing along Beach Road across from the SFYC would curtail them going up and down that hillside.
> I'm tired of all the rocks in the road as a driver, and as a cyclist
> they're downright dangerous. Eliminate their ability to go up and
> down that hillside and a lot of that particular problem would go away.
> They will still be able to use some of the steps (unless we could
> convince homeowners to put up gates), but when they use the steps they
> aren't dropping rocks down on the road.

>

> Finally, as you walk down Beach Road, look over the railing down at
> the house next to the yacht club. The corner of their fence is
> actually quite close to Beach Road at one point. Stretch a short
> fence from there to the retaining wall and you would restrict the
> pathway that they use along the water. Put a gate in it so people
> could get through. I think a lot of them bed down in that area,
> that's really their only easy access - the beach is often closed except at lower tides.

>
>
>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Wyman Harris [mailto:boater54@aol.com]

> Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2016 6:20 AM

> To: Albert Richards <AlbertRds@yahoo.com>

> Subject: Re: And you laughed at my suggestion...

>

> We will consider this courageous out of the box solution. Wyman

>

> Sent from my iPhone

>

>> On Aug 10, 2016, at 11:45 PM, Albert Richards <AlbertRds@yahoo.com> wrote:

> <http://www.foxnews.com/science/2016/08/11/got-deer-cougars-could-help->

> contro

>> l-herds-study-says.html

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>> !!

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>> <winmail.dat>

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Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Miriam Ganz <daisybugg21@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2016 5:20 PM
To: Alison Foulis - City Clerk
Subject: Deer

Hi Alison,

Could you please share this important article written by Alison Hermance from WildCare and Lisa Bloch from Marin Humane Society with the City Council members and post it on the Deer Sterilization Project Proposal site.

Thank you!
Mimi Ganz

Marin's deer and people can coexist peacefully

By Alison Hermance and Lisa Bloch, Marin Humane Society

Monday, August 8, 2016



Black-tailed deer, native to California, live among us and in most cases, have successfully integrated themselves into our suburban and even urban areas.

Many people feel a thrill when one of these large but shy ungulates tiptoes hesitantly through their yard, but some see the deer as a nuisance (at best) and a danger (at worst).

The perception of whether there are too many deer in Marin County seems to be subjective. Even in the small community of Belvedere, opinions differ wildly, with some people claiming the area is overrun with deer and others saying they see far fewer deer than ever before.

Marin Humane Society and WildCare data show the number of deer-related calls in the county have remained steady for years, which is a good indicator that populations are stable and not increasing.

Living with deer is a fact of life in our beautiful county and knowing a little bit about deer behavior can help make interactions with these elegant animals easier.

Occasionally, WildCare or the Marin Humane Society receives a call about an “aggressive” deer, but most of the time, what people perceive to be aggressive behavior is actually defensive and not dangerous.

Female deer with their fawns are frequently cited as an example of aggressive deer. Deer are good mothers and they are protective of their fawns, but this does not mean that they will attack if a human approaches. Instead, a deer with a fawn will simply stand its ground at a time when a deer without a baby nearby would have turned and run away. A large animal that is not running away as expected may seem threatening, but these “stand-offs” do not result in actual injury.

If a deer is standing its ground in front of you, the best thing to do is to step back and allow it to move away.

It will want to move its fawn away from a perceived predator (you), and giving it the chance to do so will prevent stress for everyone.

Keep in mind that deer want to get away from us whenever they encounter us, but on narrow lanes and stairways, sometimes the closest escape route is behind or past the person walking.

A deer attempting to escape may move toward a pedestrian in an attempt to get around him, which can

understandably be interpreted as “aggression,” even when it is not.

These scenarios explain most anecdotal reports of aggressive deer on sites such as Nextdoor.

Like all wild animals, deer will come into your yard if your property offers something they want — food, water or a place to rest safely.

If you do not want deer in your yard, consider planting landscaping that deer find unpalatable or enclosing tasty plants like roses or hydrangeas behind fences.

Empty bird baths or other sources of water if deer have been attracted to them and consider an ingenious device called the Scarecrow sprinkler to move deer along. The Scarecrow is a motion-activated sprinkler that sends a heart-stopping spray of water when it “sees” the movement of a large animal. It is an effective deer deterrent.

Most residents choose to live in Marin County because of its natural beauty and proximity to wildlife. But with that privilege comes the responsibility to understand how to coexist peacefully with all that inhabit this spectacular place.

Alison Hermance is the director of communications of WildCare and Lisa Bloch is the marketing and communications director of the Marin Humane Society, which contributes Tails of Marin articles and welcomes animal-related questions and stories about the people and animals in our community. Go to MarinHumaneSociety.org, [Twitter.com/MarinHumane](https://twitter.com/MarinHumane), or email lbloch@MarinHumaneSociety.org.

URL: <http://www.marinij.com/lifestyle/20160808/marins-deer-and-people-can-coexist-peacefully>

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Alison Foulis - City Clerk

From: Miriam Ganz <daisybugg21@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2016 5:26 PM
To: Alison Foulis - City Clerk
Subject: Deer

Hi Alison,

Could you please share this important Marin IJ Editorial with the Belvedere City Council members and post it on the Deer Sterilization Project Proposal site.

Thank you!

Mimi Ganz

Marin IJ Editorial: Belvedere wrestles with deer

Thursday, August 11, 2016



Belvedere is not the only community in Marin where deer draw sneers.

But the Belvedere City Council is the only governmental body in Marin that was considering spending \$17,000 of taxpayer money to conduct DNA testing on deer scat.

Deer have been on the council's agenda since some Belvedere Island residents urged City Hall to pursue a plan to sterilize deer as a way to reduce their population.

The DNA sampling was proposed as a way to get a better idea of the gender mix and an estimate of the size of the population of deer that is drawing complaints for trampling gardens, chewing plants and being in the way. It can be annoying to spend a lot on landscaping only to have it trampled and grazed by deer.

Neighbors urging City Hall to take action even say the deer have become a public health nuisance. They have recommended the city hire a company that tracks or traps the deer and sterilizes them in hopes of reducing the deer population.

City officials have raised some important questions, particularly concerning private property rights, and that many property owners may not welcome deer-sterilizing trackers onto their privately owned real estate.

Both the Marin Humane Society and WildCare, Marin's two leading agencies when it comes to dealing with wildlife, have spoken out against the sterilization plan, urging residents instead to consider fencing or motion-detecting sprinklers as deer-thwarting strategies.

The city should be working closely with these agencies — one of which, the humane society, it actually pays for animal-control responsibilities — to respond to complaints about deer.

That would be the strategy taken in most Marin cities.

In fact, Sausalito residents just worked to save two acres of open land, in part to preserve habitat for deer, the same mammals that some Belvedere residents want to get rid of.

Across most of Marin, people learn to live with deer.

Spending \$17,000 to collect and test deer droppings is money that could be used for more important needs.

The council has decided to hold a community meeting on the topic, to help “define” the problem and seek consensus. In a report to the City Council, City Manager Mary Neilan wrote: “The urge to ‘do something’ in response to community concern is understandable, but before taking on a specific project, be it a deer population

count or deer sterilization, the council may wish to discuss what is achievable and what goals can reasonably be expected to be met.”

By holding a town-wide meeting, the council hopes to get a better sense of the demand for the city to spend taxpayer dollars on anti-deer measures.

That’s a sound approach. But heeding the advice of the Marin Humane Society and WildCare seems to make more sense than the city declaring war on deer.

URL: <http://www.marinij.com/opinion/20160811/marin-ij-editorial-belvedere-wrestles-with-deer>

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